JUXTAPOSITION OF MYTHOLOGICAL REALISM AND MATRIX DIASPORIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE SELECT WORKS OF

CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI

A

SYNOPSIS

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INTRODUCTION

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is the foremost Diasporic writer who was born in Calcutta on 29 July 1956 and completed PhD (English) from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1985. Her thesis was focused on Christopher Marlowe and his famous works of that time. Nowadays, she resides in Houston, and her views about diaspora and migration are equivalent to loneliness,a constant sense of alienation, and longing for a lost world which are extremely evident and stressful. She is an Indian American author and Betty and gene Mc David Professor of writing at the University of Houston but wrote nostalgic glimpses in her tales with a tinge of ancient treatment in India.She is the award winning author of 18 books. Her themes include Indian experience and Bengali roots, immigration, contemporary America, women's identity, history. Myth, mythological legends, identity crisis, joys and challenges of living in a multicultural world. Her work has been published in over 100 magazines and anthologies and translated into 29 languages including Dutch, Hebrew, Hindi and Japanese. She has won numerous awards, including an American Book Award and Internation Premio Scanno Prize. Chitra Banerjee writings include tenets of diaspora imbibed with stream of consciousness as she herself being an immigrant exhibits diasporic conscience such as dilemmas, displacement, identity crisis, cultural conflict.

Migration and immigration certainly affect directly or indirectly to the conscience of characters in a tremendous way. Her writing about diaspora deals with the experience of alienation and looking back to their roots of homeland which intensifies their soul in a horrified way. She tries to free suppressed women who were like doormats for men before and inspires their soul to lift their spirit with enthusiasm and creativity and face challenges in life independently. She gave voice to female who are extremely suppressed by male society and norms in her works. Her novel *Mistress of Spices* was shortlisted for the orange prize.Her main genres were poetry, fantasy, young adult stories, magical realism, historical fiction, myth, diasporic consciousness and racism.

She wrote many enchanted novels and folklore in the form of novels. Some of the works are based on mythological grandeur, ancient folk tales, and a blend of traditional and western traditions. Some of her works are embedded in the ancient ayurvedic medicines and herbs as well as their remedial treatment for human body mechanism.She wrote in a unique way as somewhere

she points out remedial behavior of herbs in one's life and in some she portray female as a brave warrior Rani Jindan who rule throne in a dignified manner. Some of her famous works are as *The Forest of Enchantment, The Last Queen, The Mistress of spices, Sister of my Heart, Arranged Marriage, Palace of Illusion* and many more to express her golden glimpses of thoughts and viewpoint in juxtaposition of mythological realism in a dignified manner.

Her first collection of short stories, *Arranged Marriage*was awarded the American Book Award. It beautifully represents the matrix of diasporic consciousness like alienation, aloofness, quest of identity and suppression of voice by male centric society . Chitra Banerjee works are epitome of her struggle in her journey of migration from Calcutta to America which are full of enthusiasm and quest of identity and she gave voice to females and tried to free them from clutches of male dominance society and prove them as a integration of brave , witty, sharp eyed ethnic whole. The characters struggle to maintain their culture on foreign land, Native language, social relationships, religion and rituals help them to preserve culture and identity, but they end up forming a labyrinth of hybrid personalities.

She imbibed nostalgic glimpse in her tales with a tinge of ancient mythological treatment embedded in voice of female and focuses on the female point of view. She gave names to their works according to the female point of view as a building block in her journey as well as their perspective matters. She embedded a whole with a blend of bravery and in dominantwill as Rani Jindan in *The Last Queen* and female point of view as Sita in *The Forest of Enchantment (Sitayana)* and Draupadiki Mahabharata in The Palace of Illusions and boon of power of deepest insight in the *Mistress of Spices.* This novel was shortlisted for Orange Prize. Her main genres were poetry, fantasy, young adult stories, magical realism, historical fiction, myth, diasporic consciousness and racism. She perceives female point of view as Draupadi who was blamed to be responsible for War and sometimes she portrays a glimpse as Sita who feels dejected by her own husband as he demands Agnipariksha.

In some enchanting tales she portrays protagonist as migrated from her native place as in the novel *Sister of My Heart* where two sisters story is portrayed as their warmth of relationship after diaspora. This novel deals with diasporic issues of aloofness and identity crisis and shallowness in relationship and barren thought process. This book is divided in two subsections one is a princess in the palace of snakes, and another one is the queen of swords. She portrays different genres in different enchanting tales which are completely different from each other in a

unique, dignified and enchanted way.

Somewhere she portrays ancient mythological characters as mistress of spices and somewhere dejected women in *Sitayana* or Brave warrior mother in *The Last Queen*. All characters are different yet unique as all women fill different colors of cultural and conflicts and miraculous qualities of fairy tales in contrast with mythological suburbs in our history in a hierarchical manner. Most of the characters are either inspired from mythology or immigrants having roots in India but anyhow shifted abroad and tries to cop up with selflessness, quest of identity, dilemmas, contrast of conflict of cultures. The blend of mythology with qualities of diasporic consciousness induces mythological diaspora in an enchanting way in the works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

The latest novel written by Chitra Banerjee is *Independence*:A novel which is set during the partition of India in 1947 and weaves a story of three sisters and their unbroken relationship and their struggle of living. She paints India and its independence with deep insight of identity of three sisters and devastating India. She gave voice to three sisters as she wrote novel from their point of view.

What is Mythological Realism?

Mythological Realism is a literary form of art that deals with a blend of forgotten legends painted in a realistic view of the world so that it blursthe line between reality and fantasy. It encourages the young generation to remember mythological legends and their folklore in such a way that they turn ideal for them and their magic changes their life in a tremendous and creative way.

What is the basic theme of Matrix of Diasporic consciousness?

The matrix represents the blend of diaspora and consciousness. While consciousness is directly and indirectly connected to the realization of an individual in a traumatic way. When somebody leaves his/her homeland to achieve height in his life and later on he realizes longingness and nostalgia for his native land deals with this mental suppression and he feels aloof and alienated. Diasporic consciousness deals with alienation, aloofness, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, quest of identity and issues regarding disintegration of cultures, identity crisis etc.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

As the time passes and generation changes folklores and mythological tales are forgotten but there tinge of miraculous qualities of heroes remains in consciousness of minds of recent generation which reflects creativity and keep them alive. Time span would erase the details and memory will disappear, but the juxtaposition of mythological realism with stream of consciousness will not fade its fragrance from our lives. It will preserve in our souls rather than in our memory. These Folklores are part of our life which imbibes our present time in a realistic way and it would keep alive the dream of common happiness and prosperity in a cherishable and dignified way weaves in enchanted manner and changes our lives for forever with their miraculous deeds. The fairy tales gives heroes a new name grounded with their miraculous immortalized qualities which turn as ideal for society.

People are inspired by fairy tales which tell facts of historic events and mythological figures and incidents in a hierarchical manner. Time passes but in fairy tales legends lives on and on and also it connects today times too with its mythological creativity as a boon. The juxtaposition of mythological realism and matrix of diasporic consciousness makes it induced to mythological diaspora in a unique way.

The term diaspora comes basically from the Greek word "diaspeiro" which means "to scatter about". It is a state in which a individual or a diasporic is living in a foreign land away from the place of his /her native land. The sociological implications of diaspora have been incorporated into literature to produce a flourishing genre in post modernism: Diasporic literature. The features of diaspora include dispersal from homeland that is usually traumatic but to upgrade their lifestyle and occupation people choose this way. This kind of Literature deals with its roots in the sense of aloofness and stigma of troubled relationship and ethical consciousness as a result of migration from one place to another and expatriation with a blend of existentialism rootlessness , nostalgia and quest of identity. The Indian Diaspora has been dignified in journey of works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in a unique way to express her quest of identity in protagonist of the novels and even she gave voice to female and focuses on viewpoint of female rather than male. She wrote so many mythological pieces of art but in female point of view and dignified way to elaborate voice of oppression and suppression of female by male centered society.

Over the last few centuries, there has been an increase of literature among members of racial sectional groups and as well as among academics, surrounding the concept of diaspora. The formation of the Earth after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden was the opening outlook in history when this great odyssey of diaspora began. Adam and Eve were residing happily in the Garden of Eden but as they disobeyed the order of God so they have to leave their native land forcefully without their consent it was just migration from one place to another forcefully and it leads to the tale of the diasporic odyssey. The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) defines diaspora as anybody of people living outside their traditional homeland. Under Colonialism, Diaspora is a mixed movement; it involves the European's temporary or permanent movement in all parts of the world, which further leads to colonial settlements. Consequently, the increasing economic exploitation of the already settled places necessitated large amounts of labor that could not be fulfilled by the local population.The diaspora can be different for different individuals as some willingly leave their native place, some leave for job prospects and for a short duration of time, and some are forced to leave due to some motive of better lifestyle or partition prospect or some unexpected and unavoidable circumstance.

As expatriate refers to a professional sent to a foreign land byhis or her government or company. The term immigrant refers to a person who arrives in a foreign land with a hope to settle there forever. So the difference between expatriate and immigrant is that the expatriate doesn't imply the sense of permanence, but the immigrant does possess the connotation of permanence. An expatriate is mostlycloser to the past and his or her focus is on the native country to which he or she belongs. An immigrant on the other handenjoys his or her present in the host land and shows desire to assimilate with host land.Migration is the usual nature of human existence.

The human history of each and every country has numerous records of people's migration from one part to the other. The first humans on the Earthmighthavemoved fromplacetoplaces insearch offood andshelter.Notonlyhumansbut birds, animals and every life form on the earth from the antiquity of time decide journey in every season in search of food and breeding place. In ancient times, human being's migration had the purposetofulfillbasicneedsonly. Withthepassageoftime,man'sneedsincreased,andtosatisfy increasing needs, either people or goods needed to move from place to place. As a result, food, spices, clothes, medicines, jewelry and other things began to be transported from one place to another and around the world. With the

formation of the kingdom and army, the imperial migration started. Temptation for power and property made the emperors and invaders expropriate more and more places, and soon they decided to migrate from place to place leaving their land barren in quest of power and money. Moreover, human nature has always been curious. Britishers came to India to colonize and left their native homeland in quest of power , exploitation of resources, money .

In this male-centered society a female has to be migrated from her origin of birthplace after marriage as per the prefixed male-centrictraditions and customs. The spread of English education and the English language was encouraged by imperialists to rule on hearts of people unconditionally. They think that if they spread English it would help them in the easiest way in ruling colonized territories. Indian writing in English denotes a heart-wrenching emotional text written by English authors as well as Indian authors as their mother language. It includes sort of various genres and devoted to emotions and perception of an author. It comprises the body of work mostly in Africa, England and in India and somehow by Indian Diaspora consciousness. It also focuses on mythological realism and its blend with stream of consciousness as imbibed with diasporic consciousness as a basic theme in the works of Chitra Banerjee.In her works she frees female from clutches of male dominated attitude and quest of women indominated will and strength in a dignified aspect in her novels.

Chitra Banerjee is a contemporary Indian Diaspora writer who wrote many novels in a different context and environment. She has portrayed female mythological figures and gave voice to her to express her suppression in a tremendous way to free her from the clutches of male dominance. Even she gave voices to not only the protagonist but other females too. Chitra Banerjee wrote The *Forest of Enchantments* which is a retelling of Ramayana from the point of view of Sita and named *Sitayana*. She gave voiceto Sita to express her Suffering and dejection by her own husband and male-dominated society which ruins her life. She wrote a masterpiece *The Palace of Illusions* which is a mythological tale of Mahabharata which is the journey of struggle with humiliation and sacrifice from the viewpointof Draupadi. Some novels' major theme is diasporic consciousness blended with the quest for identity and aloofness in *Sister of my Heart* and *A Vine of Desire*. Somewhere she chooses mythology in ancient India as the folklore of miraculous properties of spices and herbs in *Mistress of spices.*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Manisha (2019) states in her research paper that Divakaruni's first novel The Mistress of Spices (2013) is an investigation in powerful validness and solidifies Hindu legends, stories, and superstitions with contemporary American social issues including interracial strain, ethnic 29 character, pilgrim assimilation, extraordinary void in the lives of rich Indians, juvenile resistance and anguish, unthinkable interracial assessments and harmful and broken connections. The book was shortlisted for orange prize from England and was named may be the best book of 1997 by the Los Angels Times. It is made into a film by Gurinder Chadha.

T. Chandra (2019)expressed her views in his dissertation named"Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novels1: A Thematic Study" depicts power of women and their indominated will and bravery and wit and imbibes with culture in their native land with reference of heroines such as Draupadi, Tilo, Anju, Sudha, Rakhi and Mrs. Gupta in her enchanting works. Chandra discusses basic yet unique themes embedded in Chitra Banerjee selected works like feminism, aloofness, identity crisis, multiculturalism, tradition and integrity, alienation, discrimination, east west conflict, human relationship, shadow of past roots etc.

R. Ranirevathi (2019)analyzes in the journal " Problems of Expatriation for women: A Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakarui's selected novels" , her subject deals with stories of Indian who migrate from motherland to foreign land for varied reasons such as occupation , education, business, Lifestyle upgradation leads to rootlessness, alienation, identity crisis, longingness, dilemma of culture and tradition, assimilate new socio cultural life style. In diaspora writing the female characters realize pain of immigration and double jeapardy of self identity crisis in individual level and at social level in an alien country.

Banani Chakraborty (2019) wrote the article named "9/11 and the terror fear in the diasporic community: the recent fiction of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni" conveys the transformation of lives in America after the Islamic attack on 9/11 through the novels Queen of dreams, One amazing thing and Oleander girl. Characters accept lifestyle and culture prospect of America still long for their native roots of India.

Ashok Chaskar (2019) wrote in the journal "The Vine of Desire: A study of Immigrant's cultural dilemma and displacement" which deals with psychological change in Sudha and Anju lives after migration from India and reluctance in continuing American life and nostalgic for their roots in Bengal.

P. Valli. Deivanai (2019) wrote under the title "Self Revelations in Chitra Banerjee The Mistress of Spices" discloses Tilo's inner conflict of establishing self identity. It fuses the narrative technique of prose and poetry using magical realism deals with ancient tradition of treatment through herbs and plants.

G. Akilandeswari (2021) wrote in the article "concerns of women, motherhood, and familial love in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Sister of my Heart and the Vine of Desire"that diaspora is collective experience and journey attached to the multiculturalism and psychological conflict going through during journey away from their native land. Chitra Banerjee's character represents the dilemmas of Indian women in male dominant society. She uses her deep insight to psychological mind set to characters and discovers their own sense of self amidst joy and heartbreaks.

Padmaja (2022) analyze under the title "Women in Diaspora: A study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's fiction" that particularities of Indian women's assimilation in American culture which reflects controversial female identity and cultures collision, patriarchy experienced by female. Divakaruni's novels deal with the theme of immigrant conflict and acceptance of a new culture of the country in a generous way.

Dr. G. Vennila (2022) analyze in her research "A stereotypical framework of pressure, trauma and relief in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The unknown errors of our lives" and focuses on the diasporic conflict that traces the stereotypic pattern of pressure, trauma and relief in a few short stories in this anthology. Chitra Banerjee power of deep psychological insight to the characters makes it tremendous.

RESEARCH GAP

The Review of Literature has signified that there are only a few dissertations and research studies available about the works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni about Diaspora and its concerned literature features but the juxtaposition of mythology with magical realism and embedded with a matrix of diaspora with a stream of consciousnessare not covered yet by any researcher. Earlier studies have claimed in her works as the theme of bravery and feminism but not in the context of mythological realism which is connected directly or indirectly to the sense of alienation and quest of identity as found in diasporic literature.

As Chitra Banerjee gave voices to females so most of the studies claim the theme of feminism even though they did not consider mythological diaspora in legends and multicultural conflicts and broken relationships with quest of longingness in their lives. Some include a stream of consciousness and some deal with diaspora but the area of mythological realism in juxtaposition is unique in an incredible way. Usually, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is famous for her diasporicworks but the features of mythology with a tinge of magical realism is not listed so I found a gap of research in this unique way and decided to explore my research in this specified and blended manner to find fruitful research and shades of characters in this tremendous way. This study deals with the basic and stream of consciousness in the conscience of mythological legends and their desire to migrate but a sense of longingness make them aloof.

NEED OF THE STUDY

In the history of Indian Diasporic literature, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is foremost diasporic writer who was migrated from her roots in Calcutta, India and now a days lives in Houston and one of the famous Indian author who portrays enchanting tales of mythology in female voice in a well dignified way with diasporic features added in the text viably. As she herself is connected from her roots in India and facing a sense of alienation, nostalgia, quest of love for her identity and poured her conscience in characters of mythological novels. She won many awards like Orange book award. Sahitya Academy Awards and many more and even some films were produced based on her novels. She also wrote series of short stories in Arranged Marriage, she potrays Rani Jindan as epitome of bravery and Tilo as Mistress of Spices who uses spices as healer for mankind in traumatic situations rather than only in cooking. Chitra Banerjee gave voice to suppressed Draupadi when she was insulted in Large Sabha and her husband was responsible for her suffering. Even she portrays Sita as innocent women who have to suffer a lot and her quest of dignity and identity.Her writings inspired every woman to be free from clutches of male dominance and lift her spirit with creative independence and enthusiasm. It would surely change the perspective of female, and nobody would help them to get rid of this unavoidable suppression until they break chains of silence and humiliation. This study will allow us to weave mythological realism imbibed with stream of consciousness in the terms of Mythological Diaspora in diasporic literature works of the Author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To analyse the selected literary texts of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.
- To explore themes of Mythological Realism and Stream of Consciousness in the works of Chitra Banerjee.
- To analyse mythological diaspora and its features of the quest of identity. The retelling of the mythological epic from the point of a female and their quest of longingness is the major concern. Most of the protagonist has their roots in their native place and the quest for their identity always.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The selected writings of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni will be analyzed and weaved for understanding the themes of Mythological Realism in the juxtaposition of stream of consciousness in the context of mythological diaspora

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The delimitations of this study are as follows:

1) The literature used in this study deals withancient Indian customs and traditions and even lists knowledge of ancient herbs used for healing.
2) The themes used in her works are so vast that they are not easy to comprehend. The themes of different novels show ambivalence in writing.
3) Some great mythological epics are described and referred to in her writing like Ramayana and Mahabharata and to make her novels understandable, one has to read these epics thoroughly.
4) Chitra Banerjee somewhere wrote story of Legend Rani Jindan and her journey from childhood to queen as well as warrior but reader must know about glory of Rani Jindan thoroughly and how she made balance between a mother and a warrior and folklores related to her identity . Without knowing her glory, nobody can visualize deep insight in work of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.
5) The basic Theme of Juxtaposition of Realism and Mythology is not possible if reader don't know about mythological legends and their folklore.

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RESEARCH QUESTION

The Research question pertinent to this study is as follows:

RQ: What kind of Diasporic stream of consciousness found in the works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni?

RQ: Why Chitra Banerjee focussed on retelling of mythological epics and weaves it with folklores in an enchanted way of magical realism?

RQ: What is Diaspora in English literature? And how it can be juxtaposed with Conscience in the embedded way?

RQ: Why a person goes away from their native homeland and later on feel nostalgic towards his roots?

RQ: How migration is directly and indirectly connected to Adam and Eve and our mythological Legends?

RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodology

It deals with the basic terminology to the research to explore and justify our intention to write a dissertation. It helps us to show the purpose of research and how it is not explored by another researcher in the past and even in the near future, it would not be explored as used with this methodology and uniqueness of the research in a dignified way. The purpose of imbibing this methodology is to explain approach embedded in this research. This portion deals with the journey of writing a milestone of research by the researcher by using a set of rules and procedure to beautify the imbibed understanding of the covered segment of literature. It tells how a rules can change the meaning of the content in an enchanted way .A Methodology is basically a set of rules for basic terminology to understand the problem during research . Here blended terminology is used to express which Mythological realism and diasporic consciousness.It deals with our ancient mythological legends in a realistic world and nostalgia of leaving their homeland.

Sample

Several of the works of Chita Banerjee Divakaruni have been considered in this study such as: *A Forest of Enchantment, The Mistress of Spices, Sister of My Heart, A Vine of Desire, The Palace of Illusion, The Last Queen, Arranged Marriage* etc.

Analysis

In this work, juxtaposition method that deals with blend of a separate phenomenon and it produces a unique amalgamation whole. Specifically, the method used in this Research is the fusion of Mythology and Diaspora and combines to make mythological diaspora which deals the legends journey from one place to another and their feeling of alienation and aloofness and their identity crisis. Time has passed , generation changed but magic that created that time has floated from there to now in literature by textual analysis methodin which researcher gathers information from various mediums like Newspaper, Internet, Documents, Films, Books.Data is first gathered and then evaluated hierarchically and then analyzed deeply from the point of view of Research and Evaluation.

CHAPTER PLAN

This Dissertation is comprised of five chapters as follows:-

- Introduction
- A systematic review of existing literature.
- Chapter 3: Theme of Mythological Realism.
- Chapter 4: Theme of Diaspora.
- Chapter 5: The Juxtaposition of Mythological realism and matrix of consciousnessin context with Mythological Diaspora.
- Conclusions.

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